number 14 it is preferably exemplified by replacement of the glycine residue with aspartic acid residue.

Q4

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claim 3 without prejudice toward prosecution in an ensuing continuation application.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) An isolated DNA molecule encoding a small subunit of acetohydroxy acid synthase isozyme III originating from *Escherichia coli*, which mutation is selected from the group consisting of:

a) a mutation that replaces the serine at amino acid number 17 in SEQ ID NO: 2 with an amino acid other than serine and

b) a mutation that replaces both (i) the serine residue at amino acid number 17 in SEQ ID NO: 2 with an amino acid other than serine and (ii) the glycine residue at the amino acid number 14 in SEQ ID NO: 2 with an amino acid other than glycine,

Q5

wherein the unmutated sequence of acetohydroxy acid synthase isozyme III is SEQ ID NO:2.

2. (Amended) The isolated DNA according to claim 1, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 17 replaces serine with a phenylalanine residue and the mutation at the amino acid number 14 replaces glycine with an aspartic acid residue.

4. (Amended) An isolated DNA encoding a large subunit and a small subunit of acetohydroxy acid synthase isozyme III originating from *Escherichia coli*,

Q6

wherein the small subunit has a mutation that replaces the glycine residue at amino acid number 14 in SEQ ID NO: 2 with an amino acid other than glycine and has at least one mutation selected from the group consisting of:

a) a mutation that replaces the serine residue at amino acid number 17 in SEQ ID NO: 2 with an amino acid other than serine,

b) a mutation that replaces the asparagine residue at amino acid number 29 in SEQ ID NO: 2 with an amino acid other than asparagine, and

c) a mutation that replaces the glutamine residue at amino acid number 92 in SEQ ID NO: 2 with a stop codon,

a6

wherein the mutated acetohydroxy acid synthase isozyme III catalyzes the generation of (i) α-acetolactate from pyruvate and (ii) α-aceto-α-hydroxybutyrate from α-ketobutyrate and pyruvate; and is not inhibited by L-valine.

5. (Amended) The isolated DNA according to claim 4, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 17 replaces serine with a phenylalanine residue, the mutation at amino acid number 29 replaces asparagine with a lysine residue or a tyrosine residue, and the mutation at amino acid number 14 replaces glycine with an aspartic acid residue.

6. (Amended) A bacterium which harbors the DNA according to claim 1 on chromosomal DNA or plasmid in said bacterium and has an ability to produce L-valine.

Please add the following new claims:

10. (New) The isolated DNA according to claim 1, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 14 replaces glycine with an aspartic acid residue.

11. (New) The isolated DNA according to claim 1, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 17 replaces serine with a phenylalanine residue.

a7

12. (New) The isolated DNA according to claim 4, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 14 replaces glycine with an aspartic acid residue.

13. (New) The isolated DNA according to claim 4, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 17 replaces serine with a phenylalanine residue.

14. (New) The isolated DNA according to claim 4, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 29 replaces asparagine with a tyrosine residue.

15. (New) The isolated DNA according to claim 4, wherein the mutation at amino acid number 29 replaces asparagine with a lysine residue.

16. (New) A bacterium which harbors the DNA according to claim 4 on chromosomal DNA or plasmid in said bacterium and has an ability to produce L-valine.

17. (New) The bacterium according to claim 16, wherein expression of said DNA is enhanced.

18. (New) The bacterium according to claim 17, wherein said expression is enhanced by locating said DNA under the control of a potent promoter or amplifying a copy number of said DNA.

19. (New) A method for producing L-valine comprising the steps of cultivating the bacterium according to claim 16 in a culture medium, producing and accumulating L-valine in the culture medium, and collecting L- valine from the culture medium.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claim 3 has been canceled.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 have been amended.

Claims 10-19 have been added.

The claims as originally filed and pages 4-28 support the amendment of Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 and new claims 10-19. Page 22, lines 9-20 and reference document 1 (attached herewith) support the amendment to the specification. The Sequence Listing, as originally filed, supports the proposed drawing amendments provided below.

No new matter is believed to have been entered by the present amendment.